U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

POLLUTION REPORT

I. HEADING

Date: May 2, 2001
Subject: J-Pitt Steel Melt Shop Site, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois
From: Brad Benning, U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator, Region 5

To:
K. Mould, U.S. EPA, OSWER, Washington, D.C. ..... FAX 703/603-9133
R. Karl, U.S. EPA, Chief, ERB, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
B. Bolen, U.S. EPA, Chief, RS2, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
L. Nachowicz, U.S. EPA, Chief, RS3, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
W. Messenger, U.S. EPA, Chief, ESS, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
J. Maritote, U.S. EPA, ERB, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
G. Narsete, U.S. EPA, ERB, Chicago, IL ..... FAX 312/353-9176
S. Kaehler, CDOE, Chicago, IL.....FAX 312/744-6451

POLREP No: Initial and #1

II. BACKGROUND

Site No: B5Y2
Response Authority: CERCLA
CERCLIS No: ILN000508169
NPL Status: No
State Notification: ILL. EPA
Status of Action Memorandum: Pending
Start Date: April 5, 2001
Completion Date: N/A

III. SITE INFORMATION

A. Incident Category

CERCLA Emergency Action

B. Site Description

The J-Pitt Steel Melt Shop Site is a former steel making operation located in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. The site, located in an industrial area at 3151 South California Avenue, has been abandoned since 1997. The site is bordered to the north by the Chicago Illinois Western Railroad tracks, to the east by a scrap metal operation, to the south by the Chicago Sanitary District Canal (the Canal), and to the west by California Avenue. The site consists of a large industrial building in good condition, divided into three sections. Section one, the northern most section of the building is approximately 630 feet by 98 feet, section two is 760 feet by 60 feet, and section three, adjacent to the Canal, is 530 feet by 72 feet. Scattered throughout the facility are large pieces of steel making equipment, including a furnace, baghouses, a cooling tower, and numerous large transformers. Near the furnace in section three, a series of elevated platforms and walkways remain intact. Large quantities of various industrial materials used in the steel making process, including silica, insulating Tundish spray, and magnesium oxide remain in the building.

C. Description of Threat

Numerous drums, fuel storage containers, paint cans, poly tanks, and miscellaneous small containers are scattered throughout the site. The contents of these drums and containers include oils, grease, acids, paints, cleaning fluids and other unknown materials. Several pits containing unknown liquids are located in sections two and three. In addition, large piles of slag, dust, and flyash are present the building, mainly in section three. Asbestos and radioactive material is also present on-site. Site access is not completely restricted and previous trespassers on-site have removed the majority of the electrical equipment and copper wiring.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Response Activities to Date (April 5, 2001 to April 19, 2001)

U.S. EPA was notified of the site by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Chicago Marine Safety Office on Thursday, April 5, 2001. The USCG reported an oil sheen on the Canal near the site. On-scene coordinator (OSC) Brad Benning responded to the call. A site inspection lead to the discovery of 258 artillery rounds in a slag pile at the back of the facility. Because it was unknown whether the artillery was live, several agencies were notified. The Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Department of the Environment (CDOE), and the U.S. Army all responded to the site. After several days of negotiations, the artillery rounds were removed by the U.S. Army on Tuesday, April 10, 2001.

On April 6, 2001, in order to examine the additional threats on-site, OSC Benning mobilized an ERRS contractor, Ferguson Harbor, Inc., to the site to assist with site work. In response to the sheen on the Canal, several pieces of absorbent boom were placed in the Canal to contain the sheen. Further investigation of the building uncovered other immediate threats including drums and other containers containing oils, grease, baghouse dust, antifreeze, acids, hydraulic fluid, and other unknown liquids, leaking transformers, open pits with unknown contents, large slag and dust piles, and asbestos materials. U.S. EPA and Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) performed radiation survey throughout the site building. Two large steel kettles in section two were identified as containing radioactive materials, specifically Cesium-137. Another source of Cesium-137 was discovered in a room between sections two and three.

On Monday, April 9, 2001, a four person crew from Ferguson Harbor, along with equipment including a Bobcat, mobilized to the site. The Ferguson Harbor crew began setting up a staging area in section one for the drums, tanks, transformers and other containers located throughout the facility. A sea curtain was placed in the Canal, in addition to the existing absorbent boom, to further contain the oil sheen.

OSC Benning also mobilized the Superfund Technical Assessment Team (START) to site on Monday, April 9, 2001. START performed air monitoring throughout the site and collected samples to help further identify the threats to human health and the environment on-site. START collected six samples from locations throughout the building. Oil was discovered on the floor of a transformer room in section three. START collected a sample of this oil and used a Chlor-n-oil, PCB field test kit to determine if PCBs were present in the oil. The result from the test kit was less than 50 parts per million (ppm), therefore a sample from this area was not sent for analysis. The samples were sent to a laboratory for analysis, four of the samples were analyzed for TCLP Lead and RCRA metals, and the remaining two samples were analyzed for PCBs.

Analytical results indicated high levels of PCBs in one sample. Arsenic, barium, chromium, cadmium, lead, mercury and silver were all detected in the four samples analyzed for RCRA metals. These metals were detected at varying levels, low levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, mercury, and silver in all four samples, but slightly higher levels chromium and lead in two samples. Levels detected were: 54,000 ppm PCB-1254 in the NE Floor sample, 528 ppm

chromium and 854 ppm lead in the Roll Door Room sample, and 1,310 ppm chromium and 342 ppm lead in the South Room sample.

Over the next two weeks, Ferguson Harbor continued to locate drums, tanks, and various containers from throughout the building and stage them in the front of section one. Drums and containers were located throughout the facility, including upper levels of the platforms around the furnace and on top of office rooms located throughout the facility. The contents of the drums located in higher levels were pumped to empty drums on the floor in order to safely remove the drums and their contents from these restricted access areas. A small lab was discovered in section three. The lab contained small amounts of various acids including nitric acid, muratic acid and hydrofluoric acid. These acids, along with the other chemicals stored in the lab area, were overpacked in five-gallon buckets and staged with the materials in section one.

In order to determine the nature of the contamination in the dust and soil throughout the facility, START established a grid system in sections two and three. Section two was divided into grids of approximately 100 feet in length and section three was divided lengthwise into grids of approximately 50 feet. On April 11 and April 12, 2001, START collected a composite sample of the material located in each grid. A total of ten samples were collected from section two and nine samples were collected from section three. On April 16, 2001, a U.S. EPA contractor brought an X-ray fluorometer (XRF) instrument to site in order to perform an on-site analysis for lead and cadmium on the composite grid samples previously collected by START. START collected two additional samples for XRF analysis, on sample from the large slag pile outside the building in section three, and one sample of baghouse dust from a drum in section one. The XRF analytical results indicated lead in concentrations over 500 ppm in only three samples, and cadmium levels over 500 ppm in two samples. The highest lead levels, approximately 1200 ppm, were detected in the sample collected from the drum of baghouse dust in section one.

In an effort to further prevent any oil spills or leaks in the building, Ferguson Harbor drained the large oil reservoirs of several pieces of equipment remaining on site. The oil was pumped into empty 55-gallon drums. As of April 18, 2001, all visible drums, containers, and tanks located throughout the site were staged in section one. Approximately 176 55-gallon drums, six 175-gallon poly tanks, one 300-gallon steel fuel tank, and 20 pallets of various small containers were staged in this area. In addition, eight gas cylinders and approximately twenty old batteries were found in the building.

During the course of the emergency site evaluation activities, the PRP agreed to take over the site clean-up operations. Once all the drums, containers, tanks, and other materials were staged in a central area, OSC Benning halted U.S. EPA site activities in order to negotiate a consent order with the PRP for the remaining site work. The final day on-site for U.S EPA, Ferguson Harbor and START was April 18, 2001.

B. Next Steps

1. Negotiate a consent order with the PRP for removal of the immediate threats on-site
2. Conduct PRP oversight to ensure the proper activities are occurring on-site.

C. Key Issues

N/A

V. ESTIMATED COSTS (through April 19, 2001)

	Used	Ceiling	Percent Remaining
ERRS	$ 30,000	$ 35,000	15%
START	$ 6,500	$ 10,000	65 %

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on amounts known by the OSC at the time of the preparation of this report. The cost accounting data shown in this report does not necessarily represent the exact monetary figures which the U.S. Government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

VI. DISPOSITION OF WASTES

DISPOSITION OF WASTES
31st AND CALIFORNIA
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Wastestream / Backfill	Medium	Quantity	Units	Treatment	Disposal Facility
Artillery Rounds	N/A	258	Each	None	